



MA Prescription Monitoring Program County-Level Data Measures (Calendar Year 2023 Quarter 2 and 2023 Quarter 3)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Professions Licensure, April 2023

The Department of Public Health's (DPH) Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PMP) serves as a repository of data for all prescription drugs dispensed statewide, including those prescriptions that are sought after for illicit and non-medical use and thus represent the highest potential for abuse (federal Schedules II – V, including certain narcotics, stimulants and sedatives). The PMP also enables prescribers and dispensers to access a patient's prescription history and can be used as a clinical decision-making tool, allowing the provider to have a holistic view of the patient's medications.

When interpreting PMP county-level data, it is important to emphasize that increases or decreases in a single measure may not indicate an increase or decrease in prescription misuse or abuse. Put simply, use does not always equate to abuse. There are many factors that might explain an unusually high rate of prescribing in a given area. For instance, an area which contains a large number of residents in long-term care facilities may result in a high rate of opioid prescribing.

These datasets inform critical discussions about opioid prescribing, provide an important baseline to better inform future policy decisions and allow the state and stakeholders to more meaningfully measure whether policy initiatives are effective.

Effective October 6, 2014, all hydrocodone combination drug (HCD) products (e.g., Vicodin) were reclassified from Schedule III to Schedule II. This reclassification during the last quarter of 2014 makes comparisons over time difficult to interpret. Beginning with CY 2015 data, reports of Schedule II products will include all HCD prescriptions.

Individuals with activity of concern "thresholds" for this report are based on a 3-month time period. MDPH has previously released annual county-level reports that provide thresholds based on a 12-month time period. Although the numbers (or rates) generated may appear to be comparable, they represent different time periods and are **NOT** an apples-to-apples comparison. The results are only comparable when the thresholds (e.g., 4 different providers and 4 different pharmacies), time interval (e.g. over a three-month period), and drug products analyzed (e.g. Schedule II opioids) are the same. Meaning, the total number (or rates) of individuals who received Schedule II-V opioid prescriptions from 4 or more providers and had them filled at 4 or more pharmacies in a 3-month period cannot and should not be compared with the total number of individuals (or rates) who received Schedule II-V opioid prescriptions from 4 or more providers and had them filled at 4 or more pharmacies in a 12-month period.

MA Prescription Monitoring Program: April – June 2023 and July – September 2023

April - June 2023 (Quarter 2)

County (County classifications are by patient zip code; patient state must also = MA)	Census Population*	Total Schedule II Opioid Prescriptions	Total Number of Schedule II Opioid Solid Dosage Units	Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription	% of Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription (of total population)	Individuals with Activity of Concern	Rate of Individuals with Activity of Concern (per 1,000)
Barnstable	228,996	19,977	924,828	8,815	3.8	11	1.2
Berkshire	129,026	10,834	538,351	4,872	3.8	<5	NR
Bristol	579,200	51,439	2,944,193	20,792	3.6	12	0.6
Dukes	20,600	1,144	56,648	555	2.7	0	0
Essex	809,829	51,002	2,430,562	23,770	2.9	12	0.5
Franklin	71,029	6,808	395,034	2,793	3.9	5	1.8
Hampden	465,825	38,237	2,008,334	17,199	3.7	18	1.0
Hampshire	162,308	12,315	709,882	5,295	3.3	8	1.5
Middlesex	1,632,002	75,011	3,396,624	37,408	2.3	39	1.0
Nantucket	14,255	655	30,364	317	2.2	0	0
Norfolk	725,981	39,116	1,970,823	18,593	2.6	19	1.0
Plymouth	530,819	38,465	2,056,071	17,509	3.3	18	1.0
Suffolk	797,936	35,707	1,890,858	16,788	2.1	21	1.3
Worcester	862,111	58,162	3,082,397	25,942	3.0	24	0.9
MA	7,029,917	438,872	22,434,968	199,361	2.8	187	1.0
Note 1: Individuals with activity of concern "thresholds" for this report are based ONLY on a 3-month time period; see notes on previous page; CY2023-Q2							
Note 2: Counts greater than 0 but less than 5 are not reported. Rates based on these small values also are not reported (NR).							
Note 3: Rates of individuals with activity of concern are based on the population of individuals who have received one or more Schedule II opioid prescriptions during the specified time period.							
Note 4: Totals for all counties combined exclude a small number of prescription records that could not be assigned a county due to inaccurate zip code/city town information reported to the program.							
Note 5: The total sum for the "Number of Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription" will be slightly different than the sum presented for the state in Figure 2 due to a small number of double counting of individuals moving from one county to another during the specified time period.							
Note 6: PMP data are preliminary and subject to updates. The MA PMP database is continuously updated to allow for prescription record correction data submitted by pharmacies. This data were extracted on 10/20/2023; Release Date: Nov 2023.							
Note 7: Beginning in 3rd quarter of 2016 the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) facilities began submitting data to the MA PMP.							
Note 8: UMDI Interim 2020 Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Municipality, UMass Donahue Institute Population Estimates Program, March 1, 2022							
Note 9: The total number of individuals with activity of concern for the state (MA) do not include suppressed values.							

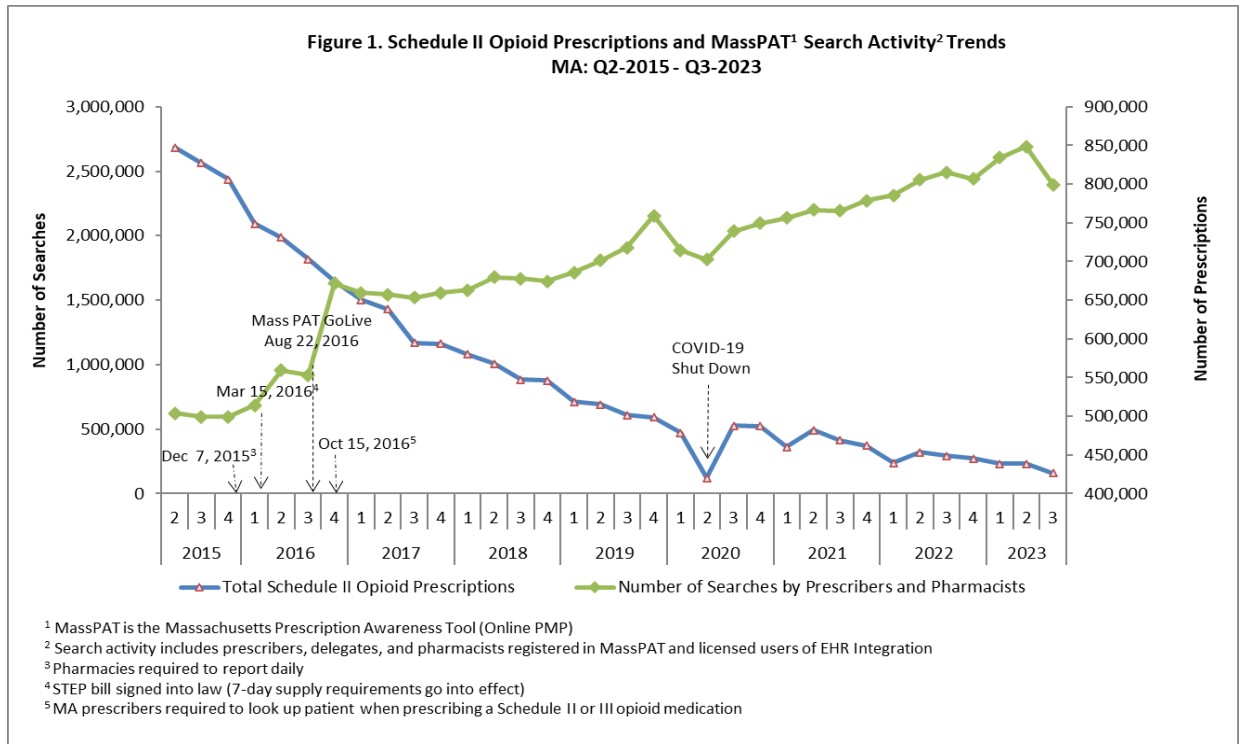
July – September 2023 (Quarter 3)

County (County classifications are by patient zip code; patient state must also = MA)	Census Population*	Total Schedule II Opioid Prescriptions	Total Number of Schedule II Opioid Solid Dosage Units	Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription	% of Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription (of total population)	Individuals with Activity of Concern	Rate of Individuals with Activity of Concern (per 1,000)
Barnstable	228,996	19,622	914,438	8,455	3.7	6	0.7
Berkshire	129,026	10,628	530,158	4,775	3.7	<5	NR
Bristol	579,200	49,726	2,895,701	19,994	3.5	14	0.7
Dukes	20,600	1,185	59,286	577	2.8	0	0
Essex	809,829	49,859	2,365,371	23,032	2.8	22	1.0
Franklin	71,029	6,828	396,907	2,720	3.8	<5	NR
Hampden	465,825	37,228	1,975,454	16,658	3.6	15	0.9
Hampshire	162,308	11,997	685,370	5,077	3.1	6	1.2
Middlesex	1,632,002	72,878	3,336,674	36,064	2.2	34	0.9
Nantucket	14,255	716	31,961	350	2.5	0	0
Norfolk	725,981	37,895	1,912,385	17,951	2.5	15	0.8
Plymouth	530,819	37,158	1,992,299	16,986	3.2	16	0.9
Suffolk	797,936	34,528	1,850,259	16,054	2.0	19	1.2
Worcester	862,111	56,381	3,018,870	25,261	2.9	23	0.9
MA	7,029,917	426,629	21,965,132	192,830	2.7	170	0.9
Note 1: Individuals with activity of concern "thresholds" for this report are based ONLY on a 3-month time period; see notes on previous page; CY2023-Q3							
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MA Prescription Monitoring Program Data

Trend Analyses for Schedule II Opioids Only

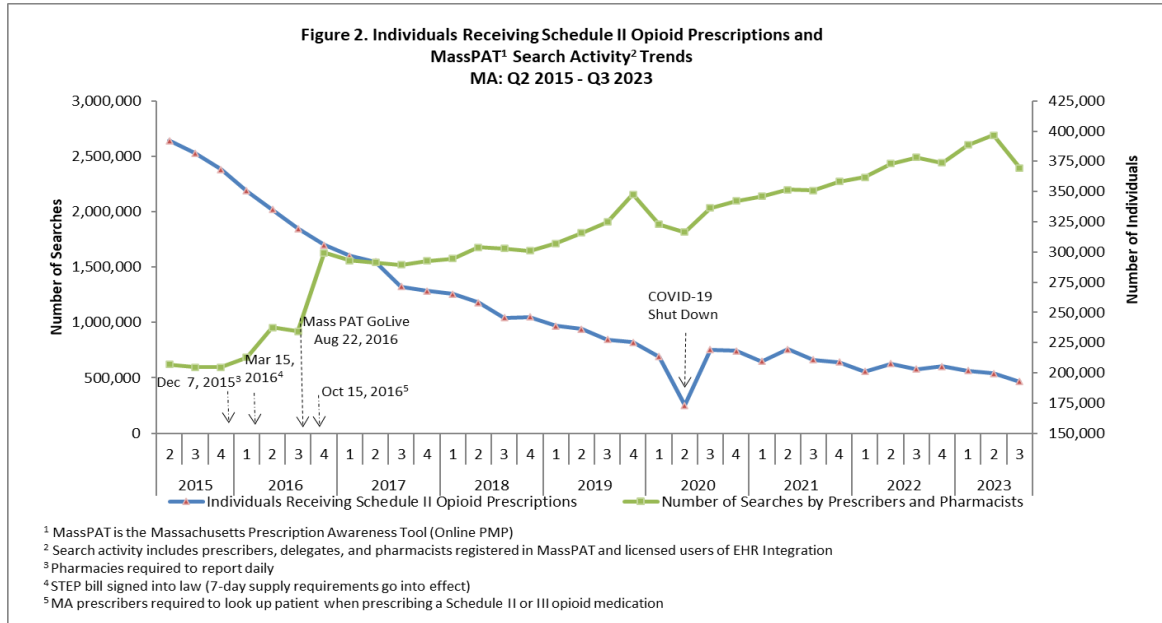
- In the 2nd Quarter of 2023, there were approximately 438,000 Schedule II opioid prescriptions reported to the MA PMP; this is approximately the same as the previous quarter and over a 47% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015 (n = 841,990 Schedule II opioid prescriptions).
- In the 3rd Quarter of 2023, there were approximately 426,000 Schedule II opioid prescriptions reported to the MA PMP; this is a small decrease from the previous quarter and over 49% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015.



Notes:

- PMP data are subject to updates. The MA PMP database is continuously updated to allow for prescription record correction data submitted by pharmacies. The data for CY2023 Q2 and CY2023 Q3 data were extracted on 10/20/2023.
- The total search counts for the most recent two quarters are notably lower compared to previous reporting periods. This is due to some discrepancies in the counts in reports our MassPAT vendor provides to the program. In the past reports the total counts were inflated due to overrepresenting the number of Gateway (i.e., Integration) searches reported to us in our daily extracts. Archived PMP reports going back to Q3 CY 2018 (beginning of Gateway or Integrated searches) are now updated to reflect the accurate counts. (Dated: March 2024)

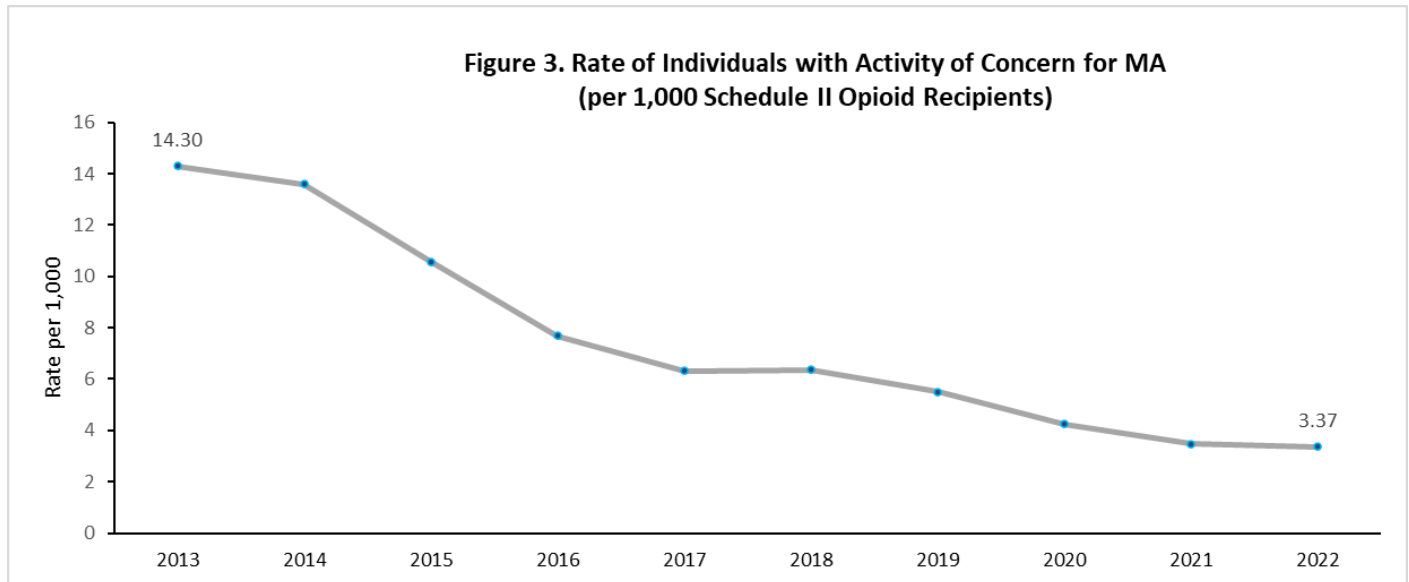
- Approximately 199,000 individuals in MA received prescriptions for Schedule II opioids in the 2nd Quarter of 2023; this is a slight decrease from the previous quarter (a decrease of about 2,400 individuals) and almost a 49% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015 (n = 390,532).
- Approximately 192,000 individuals in MA received prescriptions for Schedule II opioids in the 3rd Quarter of 2023; this is a slight decrease from the previous quarter (a decrease of about 6,500 individuals) and over a 50% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015.



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- The rate of individuals with activity of concern (also referred to as multiple provider episodes) decreased from 14.3 to 3.4 per 1,000 individuals between CY 2013 and CY 2022, more than a 76% reduction in activity of concern. Between CY 2021 and CY 2022 the rates of individuals with activity of concern decreased from 3.5 to 3.4 per 1,000 patients.



Note: PMP data are subject to updates. The MA PMP database is continuously updated to allow for prescription record correction data submitted by pharmacies. The data for CY2022 were extracted on 04/06/2023.

Source

- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, Bureau of Health Professions Licensure, MDPH